



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Livestock Owners Urged To Take Precautions Against Contracting Anthrax

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health encourages livestock owners who suspect anthrax infection in their animals to take precautions to protect themselves from the disease, according to State Epidemiologist Kirby Kruger.

Anthrax cases in livestock recently were reported to the state veterinarian. Anthrax usually appears in very wet or very dry conditions, when dormant bacteria spores in the soil are disturbed. Animals that consume the spores are exposed to the disease.

“Although the risk of people acquiring anthrax while working with anthrax-infected animals is low, it’s important that livestock owners protect themselves from contracting the disease,” Kruger said.

The Department of Health recommends that livestock owners take the following precautions when working with potentially infected animals:

- Avoid contact with the animal’s body fluids.
- Wear boots and rubber gloves to protect skin from exposure to potentially contaminated carcasses.
- Wash hands and exposed skin thoroughly after working with animals.
- Do not eat the meat of animals suspected of dying from anthrax.
- Do not conduct post-mortem exams of animals suspected of dying from the disease.
- Burn carcasses on site.

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Rarely spread from person to person, human anthrax can affect the skin, lungs or digestive tract. Cutaneous, or anthrax infecting the skin, is the most common form of the disease in humans. People who have been exposed to anthrax-infected livestock should see their health-care provider if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Flu-like symptoms, such as sore throat, cough, chest discomfort and muscle aches
- Diarrhea, bloody diarrhea and fever
- Solid, raised blisters, ulcers or sores on the skin that turn black in the center after two to six days

For more information, contact Kirby Kruger, state epidemiologist, at 701.328.4549.

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